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Investment Bankers Doing God's Work???

Posted on [April 5, 2010](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

Borrowing money. Going into debt. Christians are often warned about debt and rightly so, as recent financial meltdowns have highlighted.

Behind all the borrowing and lending is a multi-trillion dollar banking industry that people these days love to hate. An article in Rolling Stone (July, 2009), entitled "[Inside the Great American Bubble Machine](#)," described Goldman Sachs, the most venerable of the investment banks, as "a great vampire squid wrapped around the face of humanity, relentlessly jamming its blood funnel into anything that smells like money." With press like that it's not surprising that one source recently [reported](#) an increase of filing for handgun permits for self-defense purposes by Goldman executives.



In a recent interview with the [Times Online](#), however, Lloyd Blankfein, chairman and chief executive of Goldman Sachs, made a shocking statement that attracted no small amount of verbal small-arms fire his way. He said that he's just a banker "doing God's work."

"I know I could slit my wrists and people would cheer." Blankfein confesses, but then argued, "We're very important. We help companies to grow by helping them to raise capital. Companies that grow create wealth. This, in turn, allows people to have jobs that create more growth and more wealth. It's a virtuous cycle. We have a social purpose."

Step back a moment from the greed and arrogance of many of today's financial sector leaders and consider Blankfein's claim at face

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value—whether he understood it or not. Does lending have a positive social or even a spiritual purpose? Is it a predatory evil? Is it perhaps a necessary evil? What do you think?

For those of us who believe that all work is God’s work, we think Blankfein is right though he may not have taken his statement seriously. If he did, Goldman would likely be a different company. To read more about the moral good of investment banking you’ll want to read John Terrill’s article in [Cardus](#). It’s a great reminder of the need to reclaim the moral high ground in any kind of work.

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How good a liar are you?

Posted on [April 2, 2010](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

□ Are we experiencing an epidemic of dishonesty? (I admit I watch more news than I should—that’s another story.) But even if you don’t tune in to the numerous cable news outlets you know it’s true. We have a problem with veracity these days from the corporate boardroom to the halls of state, to the classroom, to the bedroom, the truth is getting harder and harder to find.

Since the fall, the entire human race has struggled with prevarication, myself included. I told some whoppers from my earliest years, like when I told some kids my father was a Texas Ranger. But I’ve never been very good at convincing others when I stretch the truth. Now, a new study explains the possible connection between my bank account and my less than stellar ability to convince someone else of a non-reality—even when I want to.

A recent posting on msnbc.com entitled “[People in power make better liars, study show,](#)” uncovers a startling finding—dishonesty comes more easily to those at the top. Maybe that’s why many get to the top.

Now that’s a scary thought when you consider the choices lawmakers are making in Washington—and Beijing for that matter. And what does this mean for what’s left in our retirement funds invested in publicly traded companies? Even the MSN contributor recognizes the precarious situation this puts us in.

The issue of integrity is at the heart of the predicaments these powerful men find themselves in. An organization's health often hinges on the trustworthiness of its leaders, ethics experts say.

I wish I could say this finding didn't apply to Christians or even churches, but experience tells me otherwise. We all have a problem with the truth at times. And it hurts everyone, including the liar in the long run. It may get you to the top faster, but then the bottom can come at [light speed](#). Ask Bernie Madoff, Jeffery Skilling, Bernie Ebbers, John Edwards, Martha Stewart, or Tiger Woods.

Thank goodness there is one place where truth prevails, God's Kingdom. We have a God with a solid grasp on reality. And he never holds back the truth, unpleasing as it may sound to those of us who want to create our own reality.

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Thank God for Taxi Drivers

Posted on [March 20, 2010](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

□ In the never-ending struggle for truth, justice, and Kingdom-thinking, I am constantly on the lookout for God's heroes in the workplace. These men and women understand that their work matters to God and see themselves as a Kingdom outpost of God's grace everyday of the week. They are not just serious about their faith on Sunday, but Monday through Saturday as well. My search this time led me to a cab driver.

In a recent [weekly email devotion](#) from my friend Patrick Lafferty, he told the story of Mosab Hassan Yousef, who was following in his father's footsteps. His father, Sheikh Hassan Yousef, is a founder of the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas. After the son was arrested by the Israelis, however, he agreed to work for the Shin Bet Israeli security service. But something extraordinary happened to Mosab Yousef in the course of an ordinary day in an ordinary place. He met a British cab driver.

Unbeknownst to Yousef, when he stepped into the cab, he stepped onto holy ground. You see, the taxi driver was an agent of the Kingdom of God. He gave Yousef a copy of the New Testament and invited him to a small group Bible study. Reading Jesus' story for the

first time, Yousef was “drawn to the grace, love, and humility that Jesus talked about” and in time, embraced Christ as his savior.

You can read more about Yousef’s amazing story in a [Wall Street Journal Online](#) posting. But while this sensational conversion tempts us to focus on the terrorist-turned-follower of Jesus, the real story is about an unnamed taxi driver who took his faith to work and walked through an open door with the gospel. It’s a pretty sure bet he wasn’t pushy or aggressive with the “son of Hamas.” I imagine he started a casual conversation like cab drivers do, and because he was spiritually alert, he saw an opportunity to talk about Jesus and he took it.

Your workplace is holy ground as well. There might be people there who Christ is drawing to himself. And you might just be one link in the chain of people who help them come to Christ. That is, if you are spiritually alert.

For more information about how you can take your faith to work click [here](#).

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Benedict’s Business Paradigm

Posted on [October 8, 2009](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

In his latest post (10/2/09) at the Cardus website “[Building an Economy of Communion](#)”, Bruce Webb asks a thought provoking question,

Is there no way to change the business mindset so that profit is not seen as an end in itself, but as a means to address social needs?

While profit is a moral good in and of itself, a casual reading of Scripture tells us that our business better be about more than that or our accounting before the Lord of the Workplace will be uncomfortable to say the least. I’ve been thinking a lot lately about the account I will give before Christ for the work I do. I think it’s something Christians need to ponder.

I would love to know what you think about the business model Pope

Benedict proposes in his recent encyclical, [Caritas in Veritate](#). Webb summarizes it at [Cardus](#) (a much easier read).

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Fishing Is Next to Godliness

Posted on [September 4, 2009](#) | [2 Comments](#)



Last chance to Join Bill Peel and Chuck Lane in Montana for three+ days of glorious fly fishing: October 15-19. Learn the amazing connection between fly fishing and fulfilling the Great Commission.

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One Link in the Chain

Posted on [August 12, 2009](#) | [3 Comments](#)

Do you know how influential you really are?

Every day, in everything we say and do, we are influencing people spiritually, either helping them move toward or away from a relationship with Christ.



A person's journey toward Christ is not one giant leap but many small steps of faith influenced by an average of 16 people, individual links in a chain of spiritual influence.

Becoming a spiritually influential person isn't about convincing people to pray a prayer of faith in Christ. It's about intentionally joining the Holy Spirit's work, respectfully helping them take one more step toward Christ, whether they are at the beginning, in the middle, or at the culmination of their spiritual journey.

Every interaction you have with people counts for eternity. You may be the next link in someone's chain. You don't have to be the entire chain. Just don't be the missing link.

Who are you helping move toward Christ? Remember everything counts.

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Economic Decisions and Moral Consequences

Posted on [August 7, 2009](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

I highly recommend a [subscription](#) to Comment from the Canadian think tank [Cardus](#). In a recent [article](#) Bruce Webb commented on Pope Benedict's latest social encyclical, [Caritas in Veritate](#) ("Charity, or Love, in Truth").

While one of Benedict's proposed solutions is quite concerning, there are a number of points we should take to heart. Here is Webb's comment on one that struck me as important.

We should also ponder carefully the claim that "*every economic decision has a moral consequence*." How many of us take the time to consider seriously the moral consequences of our economic decisions to spend, invest or work at a particular job and for a particular company? Christians should devote more time to learning about the ways in which our economic actions either serve or fail to serve the common good and the well being of the poor.

The fact is that what we buy, where we invest, and who we work for does impact others. And in a global economy, our stewardship impacts a lot of people.

What do you think?

Posted in [Evangelism](#), [Leadership](#), [The Economy](#), [Workplace Faith](#)

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Reflections on 38 years of Marriage

Posted on [July 31, 2009](#) | [11 Comments](#)

I was the perfect man:
charming, irresistible, polite,
discerning, protective, and
passionate. I was a hunk and
man of God rolled into one
ideal package.

... at least in Kathy's mind.

What she actually got was an
amiable but insecure,
protective but selfish, polite
but socially clumsy, passionate
but lustful, fit but
undisciplined, pursuer of God
with millions of miles to go on
my spiritual journey.



Bill and Kathy cut the cake

I am always amazed at the faith women have in the belief that men will change for the better once the aisle has been walked and vows repeated. Fortunately for those of the [male gender](#), the women who love us see us for who we could be, not who we are in reality.

Of course that can be dangerous for a woman. Besides the fragile grip on reality, it is fraught with temptation to take the taming of the cave man on as a woman's personal mission and prerogative.

Actually I was significantly self-righteous for many years about the fact that I didn't want to change Kathy—like she wanted to change me. I wanted the woman I thought I married. However, when I read Paul's instructions to husbands in [Ephesians 5](#), I see a different attitude commanded entirely. Being a good husband is all about helping to change the woman I married—not into the image I had in my mind, but into the image that God had in mind for her when he created her. It's not about shaping her into the perfect woman who will meet my

needs, but helping her become all she was created to be.

Today, as I look back on 38 years of marriage, I am so thankful that [Kathy Peel](#) is not the cute little adoring coed I married. Despite my help much of the time, she has become a beautiful woman of God: smart, winsome, fiercely loyal to our boys and their wives, committed follower of Jesus, [tenacious business woman](#), graciously confrontive wife, and passionate lover—and did I mention, she’s my best friend.

Posted in [Purpose](#)

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Prayer for My Work

Posted on [April 13, 2009](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

Ken Boa is one of the smartest and yet most humble men I have been privileged to learn from. Check out [Ken’s website](#) for a host of great resources that will aid you in your spiritual development. In Ken Boa’s recent [Reflections Teaching Letter](#) he published a prayer for work entitled “Work as a Mode of Worship.” I pass it on for your consideration.

You have called me to participate in Your purposes through the work I have been given to do during my earthly sojourn. May I do my work with care and excellence in the desire to be pleasing to You. I realize that all things become spiritual when they are done in Your Name. May I honor You in my choices and activities and view the works of my hands as a mode of worship. I want whatever I do in thought, word and deed to be honoring to You and edifying to others. I ask for a clearer sense of purpose and calling and for the power to accomplish that for which You have placed me on this earth.

May it be true for all who bear the name of Jesus in our daily work.

Posted in [Leadership](#), [Purpose](#), [Workplace Faith](#)

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What Is the Recession For?

Posted on [April 3, 2009](#) | [2 Comments](#)

My wife Kathy recently began blogging



for AOL's [Parent Dish](#). She offers great information for [Family Managers](#) who want to make their home a great place to be. But, it's not surprising that her editors ask her to give her blogs an economic twist. Not a bad idea at a time when everything else sounds trivial compared to the economic realities we experience daily.



The economy is even making it into the pulpit. ***And I say thankfully so.*** We need to hear what the Bible says about what we're all thinking about. A friend send me a copy of John Piper's sermon from February 1, 2009 entitled the same as this blog. I highly recommend it for anyone not wanting "to let a good crisis go the waste." Here are "some" of reasons for this economic downturn according to Piper:

1. He intends for this recession to expose hidden sin and so bring us to repentance and cleansing.
2. He intends to wake us up to the constant and desperate condition of the developing world where there is always and only recession of the worst kind.
3. He intends to relocate the roots of our joy in his grace rather than in our goods, in his mercy rather than our money, in his worth rather than our wealth.
4. He intends to advance his saving mission in the world—the spread of the gospel and the growth of his church—precisely at a time when human resources are least able to support it. This is how he guards his glory.
5. He intends for the church to care for its hurting members and to grow in the gift of love.

What do you think?

[Click here to listen, read or watch.](#)

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